

## TUESDAY EVENING, JUNE 26

and recommends that the General Synod sustain the current provisions of the Standing Rules which provide that Pronouncements be mailed to the delegates three months before the opening of the General Synod.

Dr. Arthur Sinclair was recognized and moved to amend the Overture on Pronouncements by offering the following substitute motion:

"WHEREAS, individual members and congregations of the United Church of Christ are and ought to be concerned with the Christian witness that the Church communicates to society, and

WHEREAS, the church must affirm its biblical and historic mandate to impact the message of the gospel on the social issues of our day, and

WHEREAS, individual members and congregations of the United Church of Christ have been urged to engage in the study of proposed pronouncements relating to matters of faith and morals, and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ is a covenanting community of individual members as well as congregations whose counsel and consent regarding proposed pronouncements are, and ought to be considered by the delegates to the General Synod,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Standing Rules of the General Synod be amended in order to provide for the submission of all proposed pronouncements to local churches at least (6) six months prior to the opening of the General Synod where they are to be considered, or at least (4) four months prior to the deadline for printing of pronouncements in Advance Reports." There was discussion and upon being put to a vote the Moderator declared the motion lost. There was discussion, and it was

79-GS-82 VOTED: the Twelfth General Synod adopts the revised Overture on Pronouncements:

### **Overture on Pronouncements**

WHEREAS, it is a legitimate concern that each General Synod receive informed responses from all parts of the church in regard to its proposed pronouncements, and

WHEREAS, the submission of all proposed pronouncements to local churches at least six months prior to General Synod would demand the initiation of all such pronouncements be made eight to nine months prior to General Synod, thus reducing the likelihood of response, and

WHEREAS, STANDING RULE V. 13.a.4. calls upon the Secretary of the Church to provide copies of each response to its initiator(s) and to Synod Committees deliberating the subject,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Twelfth General Synod of the United Church of Christ concurs with the Executive Council action of March, 1979 that the provisions of the Standing Rules pertaining to Pronouncements be sustained.

### **6. REFERRAL OF OVERTURE ON ROTATION OF NATIONAL OFFICERS**

Mr. Jones referred the delegates to Advance Materials, Section III, page 19, and moved to refer the Overture on Rotation of National Officers to the Executive Council.

There was discussion, and it was

79-GS-83 VOTED: the Twelfth General Synod refers the Overture on Rotation of National Officers to the Executive Council:

### **Overture: Rotation of National Officers**

Submitted by the Western Association of the Indiana-Kentucky Conference of the United Church of Christ.

WHEREAS, the strength of the United Church of Christ is in local churches; and

WHEREAS, there is a tendency for leadership to grow stale after long years of service in the same position; and

WHEREAS, there are many persons in the leadership of the United Church of Christ who have held the same position for long periods of time; and

WHEREAS, long years of absence from parish ministry allow leaders to lose touch with the needs, concerns, feelings, faith, business and program of local churches, both large and small; and

WHEREAS, long years of absence from parish ministry bring forth statements and programs from leadership that do not speak to or for local churches; and

WHEREAS, there are untapped resources of talent and creativity throughout United Church of Christ congregations and clergy; and

WHEREAS, the denomination could benefit from using these many untapped resources;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Twelfth General Synod of the United Church of Christ requests the Executive Council to appoint a special study committee on such rotation to make the necessary proposals for constitutional and/or by-law changes to effect such rotation, and that these proposals be reported to the Thirteenth General Synod in 1981; that these proposals for change be made to the effect that the following offices be subject to seven year terms: President, Vice-presidents, Treasurers, Executive Officers, Secretaries, General Secretaries, Directors, Executive Directors, Associate Directors, Business Managers, Editors and all department heads, both elected and appointed, of the Executive Offices, the United Church Board for World Ministries, the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries and all other national instrumentalities of the denomination; that in order to maintain order and smooth transition, those persons with longest term of office over the seven years be replaced by new personnel first, and a schedule for subsequent rotation be developed for each office; that persons will be eligible to reapply for an executive position after two years of involvement in the local church ministry.

### **7. RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF OUR BROTHERS WHO ARE CHALLENGING SOLITARY CONFINEMENT PRACTICES AT MARION, ILLINOIS FEDERAL PENITENTIARY**

The Moderator recognized the Rev. John McFadden (CAC), Chairperson of Section B, for a continuation of the Section report. Mr. McFadden referred the delegates to Advance Materials, Section VI, page 2, and moved the adoption of the substitute resolution In Support of Our Brothers Who are Challenging Solitary Confinement Practices at

Marion, Illinois Federal Penitentiary. Mr. McFadden called on the Rev. Richard W. Johnson (PSE) to speak to the resolution. Mr. Johnson said the issue deals with the use by state and federal prisons for long term solitary confinement units to suppress prisoners who are critical of prison conditions. The model for such units was created at the Federal prison, Marion, Illinois. The resolution reaffirms the support of the United Church of Christ for closing the solitary confinement unit at the Federal Penitentiary, Marion, Illinois. There was discussion, and it was

79-GS-84 VOTED: the Twelfth General Synod adopts the Resolution in Support of our Brothers who are Challenging Solitary Confinement Practices at Marion, Illinois Federal Penitentiary:

**Resolution in Support of our Brothers who are Challenging Solitary Confinement Practices at the Marion, Illinois Federal Penitentiary**

WHEREAS, solitary confinement deprives people of human and sensory contact; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Penitentiary at Marion, Illinois consistently uses solitary confinement as a method of control and punishment, sometimes for months and even for years; and

WHEREAS, prisoners are often placed in solitary confinement without recourse to due process or definite time limits on confinement; and

WHEREAS, Federal Judge James Foreman has stated that this unit has been used "to silence prison critics . . . religious leaders . . . economic and philosophical dissidents"; and

WHEREAS, the Marion Brothers, a group of prisoners who have been held in this solitary confinement unit (hereafter called the control unit) at the Marion Federal Prison, have filed a class action suit challenging the constitutionality of the control unit; and

WHEREAS, the Marion control unit represents an experimental model for similar units being opened in both state and federal prisons; and

WHEREAS, the class action suit against the control unit is on appeal in the Seventh U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals; and

WHEREAS, a national inter-faith religious delegation, including representatives from the United Church of Christ, The Christian Church, (Disciples of Christ), the Roman Catholic Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the United Methodist Church and other denominations and faiths, wish to visit the prisoners in the control unit but have been refused by the prison authorities;

THEREFORE, the Twelfth General Synod of the United Church of Christ, acting out of a strong biblical, ethical and historical concern for the rights and humanity of prisoners, reaffirms its support for the efforts of the Marion Brothers to close the control unit and end the practice of indefinite solitary confinement at the Marion Federal Penitentiary; and

FURTHER, the Twelfth General Synod instructs the Counsel to the denomination to proffer a letter-memorandum *amicus-curiae* in support of the lawsuit to

the Seventh U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, U.S. Courthouse, 219 South Dearborn, Chicago, Illinois 60604; and

FURTHER, the Twelfth General Synod endorses the national interfaith religious delegation to the Marion control unit and that a copy of this resolution be sent to other denominations with whom the United Church of Christ has communications, urging their consideration and support; and

FURTHER, the Twelfth General Synod directs the Executive Council to petition the U.S. Attorney General and the Director of the U.S. Bureau of Prisons to allow the national inter-faith religious delegation to visit prisoners in the Marion control unit.

(The addresses are: Mr. Griffin Bell, Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC 20530 and Mr. Norman Carlson, Director, U.S. Bureau of Prisons, Washington, DC 20515.)

**8. RESOLUTION ON LEGAL RECOGNITION OF LIVING WILLS**

Mr. McFadden referred the delegates to Advance Materials, Section II, pages 129-131, and moved the adoption of the substitute resolution on Legal Recognition of Living Wills. Mr. McFadden called on Mr. Emerson Cordes (IL) to speak to the resolution. Mr. Cordes said that a Living Will is a written document prepared by a person to express his/her wishes regarding his/her death in the event he/she should lose the use of his/her mental faculties at some future time and be unable to make rational decisions. The resolution recommends a statement on this issue. There was discussion, and it was

79-GS-85 VOTED: the Twelfth General Synod adopts the substitute resolution on Legal Recognition of Living Wills:

**Resolution: Legal Recognition of Living Wills**

WHEREAS, the Ninth General Synod of the United Church of Christ adopted the statement on The Rights and Responsibilities of Christians Regarding Human Death in which living wills are suggested; and

WHEREAS, the Maine Conference overtured the Twelfth General Synod of the United Church of Christ to go on record as supporting legal recognition of living wills with appropriate safeguards; and

WHEREAS, several states have already enacted appropriate legislation which recognizes living wills, for which we commend them;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Twelfth General Synod of the United Church of Christ affirms the Ninth General Synod Pronouncement on the Rights and Responsibilities of Christians Regarding Human Death; and

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, the Twelfth General Synod of the United Church of Christ affirms its support of the legal recognition of living wills with appropriate safeguards; and

BE IT FURTHERMORE RESOLVED, the Twelfth General Synod of the United Church of Christ directs the Office for Church In Society, in concert with appropriate conference bodies, to inform state legislatures of our position